

Canoe Trails Report and Update on Canoe Launch at Ellingham Sluice
Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary: This report sets out the progress made on the development of canoe trails in the Broads to date. Members are invited to note the contents of the report.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) which was adopted by the Broads Authority in May 2013 highlighted the increasing demand for canoe access to the Broads and identified an action to improve the information available to the public on canoe access to the navigation area. Since the adoption of the IAS officers have been working on the development of canoe trails in partnership with the Broads Canoe Hire Network. This report sets out the work carried out on the development and publication of canoe trails information. The canoe trails are intended to encourage entry level canoeing in the Broads and are directed at family group and beginner paddlers.

2 Progress to Date

- 2.1 Following the adoption of the IAS, officers were successful in obtaining external funding via the Sustainable Tourism in Estuarine Parks (STEP) project to fund work on the development of canoe trails. A local graphic designer was appointed following a tender process and the work was procured externally.
- 2.2 Officers have been collating information from the canoe hire network and working with the Broads Authority graphics department to produce a range of cultural, historical and environmental information which was forwarded to the graphic designer who, in turn, has used this information to create the canoe trails.
- 2.3 The trails project has created four canoe trails. These cover the Barton Broad area on the River Ant, the Salhouse area on the River Bure, the Geldeston to Beccles river reach and the Bungay loop on the River Waveney. The trails are based from canoe hire centres and there has been an extensive consultation process with these centres which have had an input into the development of the trails.
- 2.4 The canoe trails offer a variety of trips through a range of waterscapes. They are both geographically spread throughout the broads and offer the opportunity to see different aspects of the Broads environment.

- 2.5 The canoe trails project was delivered prior to the closing date of the STEP funding process on 1 June. An agreed four canoe trails were created and delivered to specification to budget and more importantly within the tight timescale.
- 2.6 The canoe trails have also been shared with Canoe England and the development of these canoe trails has allowed an improved dialogue and information sharing exercise between the Broads Authority and Canoe England. Building on both this relationship and the canoe trails project, officers have requested that there is a significant canoe element in next year's outdoor festival. This will highlight the Broads as a canoe destination but will also encourage the opportunity to access the Broads in a sustainable manner.

3 Future Development of Canoe Trails

- 3.1 The first four canoe trails have been well received by the members of the Broads Canoe Hire Network. The project is also supported by the Broads Authority's Navigation Committee and the Broads Local Access Forum. Feedback from canoeists has indicated that there is a demand for the project to be extended to cover other areas of the Broads. Officers are therefore currently working on the development of new trails in the upper reaches of the Rivers Waveney, Yare, Thurne, Ant and Bure which will result in most of the areas that are appropriate for the promotion of entry level canoeing in the Broads being covered by promoted trails. Officers are also working with a local canoeist on the development of a detailed canoe guide to the Broads which will hopefully be endorsed by Canoe England.
- 3.2 As part of the development of the Upper Waveney Canoe Trail, officers are working in partnership with the Environment Agency and a local landowner to provide a canoe launch point immediately downstream of Ellingham Sluice. The landowner has agreed in principle to the project proceeding and officers are waiting for a formal agreement to be finalised. After the project is finished, the Waveney River Trust will maintain the structure.

Background papers: Nil

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Broads Plan Objectives: TR1, TR2, TR3

Appendices: Nil